

Our forests are treasures of infinite value. As such, we all need to steward them to ensure they continue to provide the full array of ecological, economic, and social benefits for generations to come.

The plan you are about to examine is the result of over four years of forest assessment and planning. The plan identifies over 50 issues facing forests and forestry in Wisconsin and provides a framework to address those issues. I commend the public for the desire throughout the planning process to keep the list of issues addressed by the plan as inclusive as possible. Understandably, this breadth of issues has created a significant challenge for everyone involved in the planning process. Despite our best efforts to concisely describe the large number of complex and often controversial issues, we understand the amount of material is substantial.

In order to keep the plan manageable and easy to use, we have tried to keep discussion of the trends and issues brief. In addition, we have developed a web-based system to provide easy navigation and continuous updating as information becomes available.  
[www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/look/assessment/](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/look/assessment/)

The November 2004 Governor's Conference on Forestry marks the initial step in an on-going process to refine and develop an implementation plan for the issues identified herein. Our long-term success depends on our collective ability to actively engage in steps to tackle the challenges described. I am confident in our ability to work together to make strides that will ensure a sustainable future for the forests of Wisconsin and the millions of people who both value and rely on them.

I greatly appreciate your interest and passion for forestry in Wisconsin and your willingness to work collaboratively to shape the future of Wisconsin's magnificent forest resources. Our challenge is not a small one, however, the rewards of our efforts will be reaped for generations to come.



Paul DeLong  
*Chief State Forester*

